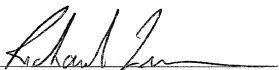


IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

PATENT
30051/37886

Applicants	)	"EXPRESS MAIL" mailing label No.
Gerhard Mueller et al	)	EL564464552US. Date of Deposit: October
Serial No.:	)	22, 2001. I hereby certify that this paper (or
Filed:	)	fee) is being deposited with the United States
Title: LENGTH-DIMENSIONING	)	Postal Service "EXPRESS MAIL POST
UNIT WITH CLIP MODULE	)	OFFICE TO ADDRESSEE" service under 37
	)	CFR § 110 on the date indicated above and is
	)	addressed to: Commissioner for Patents,
	)	Washington, D.C. 20231
)	
)	
	)	Richard Zimmermann

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

In connection with the subject patent application, please enter the following amendment:

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

After the title, please add a new centered heading to read as follows:

Field of the Invention

Page 1, please delete the first paragraph and substitute with the following:

The present invention relates to a device and a method for producing sausages as well as to a length-dimensioning unit for use in a sausage-producing device.

Page 1, after the first paragraph, please add a new centered heading to read as follows:

Background of the Invention

Page 2, after carryover paragraph from page 1, please insert a centered heading as follows:

Summary of the Invention

Page 2, please delete the second full paragraph.

Page 3, after fourth full paragraph, please insert a new centered heading as follows:

Brief Description of the Drawing

Page 3, please delete the fifth full paragraph and substitute with the following:

Making reference to the only figure, FIGURE 1, which shows a sausage-producing device according to the present invention, the present invention will be described in the following.

Page 3, after the fifth full paragraph, please insert a new centered heading as follows:

Detailed description of the Invention

Page 4, please delete the first full paragraph and substitute with the following:

The endless belts 61, 6b of the length-dimensioning unit 5 are driven via a drive, which is not shown separately. In this embodiment, the length-dimensioning unit is a separate unit which stands on rollers 14 and which is therefore movable. The length-dimensioning unit 5 can be connected to the stuffing unit 16 through a fastening means 15. A clip module 8 is arranged on said length-dimensioning unit 5 via a schematically shown holder 13, said clip module 8 being arranged at the end constituting the rear end in the direction of transport TR of the sausages. The clip module 8 includes a clip applicator of the type used in the meat-processing trade for producing closures for sausages. In addition, the clip module 8 may comprise an integrated cutter for cutting through the individual sausages as well as a loop former. A transfer unit 12, which advances the closed sausages to a suspension unit 10 provided with a plurality of hooks 11, is located after the clip module 8

when seen in the direction of transport TR. Alternatively, the transfer unit 12 can also advance the finished sausages to a discharge means provided with a conveyor belt. Also the suspension unit 10 rests on rollers 14, and it is connected to the length-dimensioning unit 5 through a fastening means 17.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please delete Claims at top of page.

At Line 1, before claim 1, please insert: We claim:

Please amend the claims to read as follows:

1 (Amended). A sausage-producing device (1) comprising in combination a stuffing unit (16) with a charging pipe (3) for stuffing sausage skins, a length-dimensioning unit (5) for controlled removal of the stuffed sausage skins, and a clip module (8) for closing the stuffed sausage skins arranged directly after said length-dimensioning unit (5) when seen in the direction of transport of the stuffed sausage skins.

2 (Amended). A device according to claim 1, wherein said charging pipe (3) has associated therewith a twist-off unit (4).

3 (Amended). A device according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said clip module (8) includes a cutter.

4 (Amended). A device according to claim 1, wherein said clip module (8) includes a loop former.

5 (Amended). A device according to claim 1, wherein, when seen in the direction of transport of the stuffed sausage skins, said clip module (8) is followed by a transfer unit (12).

6 (Amended). A device according to claim 5, wherein, when seen in the direction of transport of the stuffed sausage skins, said transfer unit (12) is followed by a conveyor belt.

7 (Amended). A device according to claim 5, wherein, when seen in the direction of

transport of the stuffed sausage skins, said transfer unit (12) is followed by a suspension unit (10).

8 (Amended). A device according to claim 1, wherein said stuffing unit (16), said length-dimensioning unit (5) and said clip module (8) are connected via control lines to a control means (7) for the sausage-producing device so that the functions of said length-dimensioning unit (5) and of said clip module (8) can be synchronized.

9 (Amended). A device according to claim 8, wherein said transfer unit (12) and said conveyor belt are connected to said control means for the sausage-producing device via control lines so as to synchronize the functions of said transfer unit and said conveyor belt with the functions of said stuffing unit (16), said length-dimensioning unit (5) and said clip module (8).

10 (Amended). A method of producing sausages comprising the steps of stuffing sausage skins via a charging pipe (3), transporting the stuffed sausage skins away in a controlled manner via a length-dimensioning unit (5), and closing the stuffed sausage skins by a clip module (8) directly after the length-dimensioning unit (5).

11 (Amended). A method according to claim 10, and twisting the sausage skins off after stuffing and before they are transported away via the length-dimensioning unit (5).

12 (Amended). A method according to claim 10, and controlling the clip module (8) via a control means (7) in such a way that the stuffed sausage skins are closed synchronously with the stuffing of the sausage skins.

13 (Amended). A method according to claim 10, and closing the stuffed sausage skins with the clip module (8) at two juxtaposed points.

14 (Amended). A method according to claim 13, and cutting through the stuffed sausage skins with the clip module (8) between these two points.

15 (Amended). A method according to claim 14, and said step of cutting through is effected after each n-th closure so as to obtain chains of sausages which comprise a specific number of sausages ($n \in 1N$).

16 (Amended). A method according to claim 11, and closing the stuffed sausage skins by the clip module (8) twice at the twist-off point.

17 (Amended). A method according to claim 10, and advancing the stuffed sausage skins, which have been closed by the clip module (8), to a transfer unit (12).

18 (Amended). A method according to claim 17, and, when seen in the direction of transport, transferring the stuffed sausage skins to a conveyor belt after the transfer unit (12).

19 (Amended). A method according to claim 17, and causing the functions of the clip module (18) to take place in synchronism with the functions of the length-dimensioning unit and the transfer unit.

20 (Amended). A device according to claim 1, wherein said clip module(8) is arranged at the rear end of said length-dimensioning unit (5), when seen in the direction of transport of the sausages.

Please add the following new claims:

21. A device according to claim 8, wherein said transfer unit (12) and said suspension unit are connected to said control means for the sausage-producing device via control lines so as to synchronize the functions of said transfer unit (12) and said suspension unit with the functions of said stuffing unit (16), said length-dimensioning unit (5) and said clip module (8).

22. A method according to claim 17, and, when seen in the direction of transport, transferring the stuffed sausage skins to a suspension unit after the transfer unit (12).

REMARKS

The claims have now been reviewed and amended to conform to U.S. practice, but have not been narrowed. The specification has been given headings, and a substitute Abstract has been provided on a separate sheet. No new matter has been added.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made".

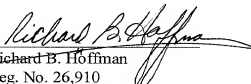
It is respectfully submitted the application as amended above is now in condition for substantive examination on the merits. If any claim or other fees are due by this Amendment, please charge our deposit account No. 13-2855.

Respectfully submitted,

Gerhard Mueller et al, Applicants

Date: October 22, 2001

By


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Abstract

A sausage-producing device comprising a charging pipe for stuffing sausage skins and a length-dimensioning unit for controlled removal of the stuffed sausage skins, to create sausages of identical lengths and identical volumes, especially also sausages whose sausage skin consists of a natural sausage casing. To allow closure in a simple manner, a clip module for closing the stuffed sausage skins is arranged directly after the length-dimensioning unit, when seen in the direction of transport of the stuffed sausage skins.

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

After the title, please add a new centered heading to read as follows:

--Field of the Invention--

Page 1, please delete the first paragraph and substitute with the following:

--The present invention relates to a device and a method for producing sausages as well as to a length-dimensioning unit for use in a sausage-producing device.-- [according to the generic clauses of claims 1, 10 and 20.]

Page 1, after the first paragraph, please add a new centered heading to read as follows:

--Background of the Invention--

Page 2, after carryover paragraph from page 1, please insert a centered heading as follows:

--Summary of the Invention--

Page 2, please delete the second full paragraph.

Page 3, after fourth full paragraph, please insert a new centered heading as follows:

--Brief Description of the Drawing--

Page 3, please rewrite the fifth full paragraph as follows:

--Making reference to the only figure, FIGURE 1, which shows a sausage-producing device according to the present invention, the present invention will be described in the following.--

Page 3, after the fifth full paragraph, please insert a new centered heading as follows:

Detailed description of the Invention

Page 4, please rewrite the first full paragraph and substitute with the following:

The endless belts 61, 6b of the length-dimensioning unit 5 are driven via a drive,

which is not shown separately. In this embodiment, the length-dimensioning unit is a separate unit which stands on rollers 14 and which is therefore movable. The length-dimensioning unit 5 can be connected to the stuffing unit 16 through a fastening means 15. A clip module 8 is arranged on said length-dimensioning unit 5 via a schematically shown holder 13, said clip module 8 being arranged at the end constituting the rear end in the direction of transport TR of the sausages. The clip module 8 includes a clip applicator of the type used in the meat-processing trade for producing closures for sausages. In addition, the clip module 8 may comprise an integrated cutter for cutting through the individual sausages as well as a loop former. A transfer unit 12, which advances the closed sausages to a suspension unit 10 provided with a plurality of hooks 11, is located after the clip module 8 when seen in the direction of transport TR. Alternatively, the transfer unit 12 can also advance the finished sausages to a discharge means provided with a conveyor belt. Also the suspension unit 10 [is] rests on rollers 14, and it is connected to the length-dimensioning unit 5 through a fastening means 17.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please delete Claims at top of page.

At Line 1, before claim 1, please insert: --We claim--.

Please amend the claims to read as follows:

1 (Amended). A sausage-producing device (1) comprising in combination a stuffing unit (16) with a charging pipe (3) for stuffing sausage skins, [and] a length-dimensioning unit (5) for controlled removal of the stuffed sausage skins, [characterized in that] and a clip module (8) for closing the stuffed sausage skins [is] arranged directly after said length-dimensioning unit (5) when seen in the direction of transport of the stuffed sausage skins.

2 (Amended). A device according to claim 1, [characterized in that the] wherein said

charging pipe (3) has associated therewith a twist-off unit (4).

3 (Amended). A device according to claim[s] 1 or 2, [characterized in that the] wherein said clip module (8) includes a cutter.

4 (Amended). A device according to [at least one of the preceding] claim[s], characterized in that the] 1, wherein said clip module (8) includes a loop former.

5 (Amended). A device according to [at least one of the preceding] claim[s], characterized in that] 1, wherein, when seen in the direction of transport of the stuffed sausage skins, [the] said clip module (8) is followed by a transfer unit (12).

6 (Amended). A device according to [at least one of the preceding] claim[s], characterized in that] 5, wherein, when seen in the direction of transport of the stuffed sausage skins, [the] said transfer unit (12) is followed by a conveyor belt.

7 (Amended). A device according to [at least one of the preceding] claim[s], characterized in that] 5, wherein, when seen in the direction of transport of the stuffed sausage skins, [the] said transfer unit (12) is followed by a suspension unit (10).

8 (Amended). A device according to claim 1, [characterized in that the] wherein said stuffing unit (16), [the] said length-dimensioning unit (5) and [the] said clip module (8) are connected via control lines to a control means (7) for the sausage-producing device so that the functions of [the] said length-dimensioning unit (5) and of [the] said clip module (8) can be synchronized.

9 (Amended). A device according to claim[s] 1, and] 8, [characterized in that the] wherein said transfer unit (12) [as well as the] and said conveyor belt [or the suspension unit] are connected to [the] said control means for the sausage-producing device via control lines so as to synchronize the functions of [these components] said transfer unit and said conveyor belt with the functions of [the] said stuffing unit (16), [of the] said length-dimensioning unit

(5) and [of the] said clip module (8).

10 (Amended). A method of producing sausages comprising the steps of stuffing sausage skins via a charging pipe (3), [and] transporting [them] the stuffed sausage skins away in a controlled manner via a length-dimensioning unit (5), [characterized in that] and closing the stuffed sausage skins [are closed] by a clip module (8) directly after the length-dimensioning unit (5).

11 (Amended). A method according to claim 10, [characterized in that] and twisting the sausage skins [are twisted] off after stuffing and before they are transported away via the length-dimensioning unit (5).

12 (Amended). A method according to claim 10 [or 11, characterized in that] , and controlling the clip module (8) [is controlled] via a control means (7) in such a way that the stuffed sausage skins are closed synchronously with the stuffing of the sausage skins.

13 (Amended). A method according to [one of the] claim[s] 10 [to 12, characterized in that the clip module (8) closes] , and closing the stuffed sausage skins with the clip module (8) at two juxtaposed points.

14 (Amended). A method according to claim 13, [characterized in that the clip module (8) cuts] and cutting through the stuffed sausage skins with the clip module (8) between these two points.

15 (Amended). A method according to [one of the] claim[s] 1 to 14, characterized in that] 14, and said step of cutting through is effected after each n-th closure so as to obtain chains of sausages which comprise a specific number of sausages ($n \in 1N$).

16 (Amended). A method according to [one of the] claim[s] 10 to 15, characterized in that the clip module (8) closes] 11, and closing the stuffed sausage skins by the clip module (8) twice at the twist-off point.

17 (Amended). A method according to [at least one of the] claim[s] 10 to 16, characterized in that] , and advancing the stuffed sausage skins, which have been closed by the clip module (8), [are advanced] to a transfer unit (12).

18 (Amended). A method according to [at least one of the] claim[s] 11 to 17, and, [characterized in that] when seen in the direction of transport, transferring the stuffed sausage skins [are transferred] to a conveyor belt [or a suspension unit] after the transfer unit (12).

19 (Amended). A method according to [at least one of the] claim[s] 10 to 18, characterized in that] 17, and causing the functions of the clip module (18) to take place in synchronism with the functions of the length-dimensioning unit and the transfer unit.

20 (Amended). A [length-dimensioning unit for use in a sausage-producing] device [(1)] according to claim 1, [characterized in that the length-dimensioning unit (5) includes a] wherein said clip module(8) [which] is arranged at the rear end [thereof] of said length-dimensioning unit (5), when seen in the direction of transport of the sausages.

Please add the following new claims:

21. A device according to claim 8, wherein said transfer unit (12) and said suspension unit are connected to said control means for the sausage-producing device via control lines so as to synchronize the functions of said transfer unit (12) and said suspension unit with the functions of said stuffing unit (16), said length-dimensioning unit (5) and said clip module (8).

22. A method according to claim 17, and, when seen in the direction of transport, transferring the stuffed sausage skins to a suspension unit after the transfer unit (12).

Abstract

[The present invention relates to a] A sausage-producing device comprising a charging pipe for stuffing sausage skins and a length-dimensioning unit for controlled removal of the stuffed sausage skins[.], to create [In order to permit] sausages of identical lengths and identical volumes, especially also sausages whose sausage skin consists of a natural sausage casing[.], [to be closed] To allow closure in a simple manner, a clip module for closing the stuffed sausage skins is arranged directly after [said] the length-dimensioning unit, when seen in the direction of transport of the stuffed sausage skins.